

thank the plaintiffs in this case for their persistence in a just cause and their patience in reaching a just solution. Given the age of the survivors, it was vital to reach this agreement now rather than wait for the outcome of lengthy litigation.

Finally, let me say I am deeply grateful to Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Eizenstat for the truly remarkable job he has done to bring us to this day. He has already done so much to help us shed light on this cruel period in human history and to bring justice to its victims. I know of few people who combine his commitment to doing the right thing with his actual skill at getting things done.

I'm sending Stu and his team to Berlin to meet with all the parties to finalize the agreement so that it can be implemented as soon as possible. After I complete this statement, he will go to the briefing room and answer your questions. Again, my deepest respect and appreciation to Chancellor Schroeder and the German Government, as well as to Deputy Secretary Eizenstat. This is a very good day for the cause of freedom and a good day for the United States.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, what kind of compensation do you think the lawyers, if any, deserve who negotiated this deal?

The President. We're all going to get a cold if we stay out here. Stu can answer all those questions. Let's go in the Briefing Room and he can answer them. Thank you.

Israel-Syria Talks

Q. Mr. President, before you go, could you give us a sense of how the Mideast talks are going today?

The President. They're going pretty well. But it's hard going and we've got work to do, so I'm going back to work. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany.

Statement on the Retirement of Cartoonist Charles M. Schulz

December 15, 1999

Like all readers of "Peanuts," I was saddened by the news that Charles M. Schulz will retire his beloved comic strip on January 4. But every one of his fans understands that this difficult decision is the right one for Mr. Schulz's health and for his family.

The characters Charles Schulz created are more than enduring icons. Charlie Brown, Linus, Snoopy, Pig Pen, and Lucy taught us all a little more about what makes us human. Virtually every day for a half-century, Charles Schulz has shown us that a comic strip can transcend its small space on the page. It can uplift; it can challenge; it can educate its readers even as it entertains us. "Peanuts" has done all of these things. I wish Charles Schulz a speedy recovery and a fulfilling retirement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Military Personnel as Part of the Kosovo International Security Force

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of June 12, 1999, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led security force in Kosovo (KFOR) and to countries in the region to serve as a national support element for them. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish the international security presence in Kosovo in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999,

for an initial period of 12 months. The mission of KFOR is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the agreement of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to demilitarize and reintegrate itself into civil society; provide operational direction to the newly established Kosovo Protection Corps; and contribute to a secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by providing, until UNMIK assumes these functions, for public security and appropriate control of the borders.

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 8,500 U.S. military personnel. This number is higher than previously reported due to normal personnel rotations and will return to approximately 7,000 U.S. military personnel when those rotations are completed. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 15 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to KFOR.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Urosevac in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining public security is a key task, and U.S. forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately one-half of KFOR's total available personnel is directly committed to protection tasks, including protection of ethnic minorities. The KFOR forces are under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

In addition, other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region to serve in administrative and logistics support roles for the U.S. forces in KFOR. Specifically, approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel are operating in support of KFOR in Macedonia and Greece and, on occasion, in Albania.

Since my report to the Congress of June 12, the FRY, in accordance with Resolution 1244 and the MTA, withdrew its military, paramilitary, and police forces from Kosovo.

The KLA agreed to June 21, 1999, to a ceasefire, to withdraw from the zones of conflict in Kosovo, and to demilitarize itself. On September 20, 1999, KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted the KLA's certification that the KLA had completed its demilitarization in accordance with the June 21 agreement. The UNMIK thereafter established a civil emergency services entity known as the Kosovo Protection Corps that is intended to provide civic assistance in emergencies and other forms of humanitarian assistance. The UNMIK is in the process of considering applications from former KLA personnel for service in this Corps.

The UNMIK has made progress in establishing the international civil presence to provide an interim administration for the people of Kosovo. The KFOR, within its means and capabilities, is providing broad support to UNMIK. As UNMIK is still developing its structures in Kosovo, KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels, including public administration, and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the Joint Civil Commissions. The KFOR personnel provide a security presence in towns and villages. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas in Kosovo to provide security, resolve disputes, and instill in the community a feeling of confidence. In addition, KFOR is providing assistance in the areas of demining, humanitarian relief, international civil police training, and the maintenance of civic works resources. Ethnic tensions in Kosovo, however, remain a concern, particularly in areas where Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians live in close proximity. Until UNMIK is able to field a full complement of civil police, public security remains principally a KFOR responsibility.

NATO has planned for the KFOR mission to be formally reviewed at 6-month intervals with a view to progressively reducing the force's presence and, eventually, withdrawing. Over time, KFOR will incrementally transfer its security and policing responsibilities as appropriate to the international civil administration, local institutions, and other organizations.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting the Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
(Serbia and Montenegro)**

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) emergency declared in Executive Order 12808 on May 30, 1992, and with respect to the Kosovo emergency declared in Executive Order 13088 on June 9, 1998.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on
Continuation of the National
Emergency With Respect to the
Lapse of the Export Administration
Act of 1979**

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C.

1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

**Remarks at a Democratic National
Committee Gay and Lesbian
Luncheon**

December 16, 1999

Well, thank you very much. First, I want to thank Mark and Peter and Andy and Charles for co-hosting, chairing this. And I thank all of you for being here.

You said some very kind things in your introduction. I'd like to thank you for being my personal friend for many years and for all the issues we've discussed and all the things we've talked about, including before I became President. I'd like to thank the people here from the White House who have helped me to make this the most inclusive administration in history. And I want to thank all of you for all the issues that we've fought on.

We actually had a very good year last year in many ways, and I got most of what I wanted in the budget at the end. But we didn't get the hate crimes legislation, so I ask you to stay with me and to make a good effort. I think we've got a much better chance to pass it in 2000, and I hope you will help me with that.

I also think we should keep trying to get a vote on the "ENDA" legislation, which I strongly support. And one final thing—Sandy Thurman's here; we talked about this on the way in—while we've made remarkable progress with HIV and AIDS in the United States, it is still raging out of control in much of Africa and increasingly in parts of Asia. And I think we ought to do more on that